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NGA Review Completed

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Middle East Situation Report #44  
(as of 1100 EST, 27 February 1984)

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LEBANON/SYRIA

[redacted] the security situation there is relatively quiet. [redacted] fighting along the Green Line dividing the East and West typically increases around 1630 Beirut time. [redacted] an anti-US demonstration, mostly composed of students and Druze and Amal fighters--many of them armed--was occurring outside the Embassy. [redacted]

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President Gemayel's decision to abrogate the 17 May troop withdrawal agreement with Israel will be conveyed to Damascus later today, according to the Beirut newspaper An Nahar. [redacted]

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US Marines completed their redeployment from the airport to the Sixth Fleet yesterday, leaving behind about 100 Marines to guard the US Embassy. Marine positions in the commercial area of the airport officially were turned over to the Army's 33rd Battalion.

-- According to press reports, however, Shia Amal militiamen immediately took control of "Green Beach"--the Marines' landing complex next to the airport--and the 6th Brigade of the LAF took over much of the airport and structures formerly occupied by the Marines. [redacted]

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The LAF, with US assistance, completed on Saturday the evacuation from the Damur area to Juniyah of 14 M48A5 tanks abandoned by the shattered 4th Brigade. The remainder of the Brigade's equipment at Damur--about 120 trucks and 6-9 tanks--is under Christian Lebanese Forces militia control and, according to militia spokesmen, will be returned to the LAF "as soon as the political situation improves." [redacted]

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Increased pressure on Muslim officers within the Army to quit their units and return to their homes has resulted in many Sunni and Shia officers taking "leave" to avoid harm to themselves and their families. [redacted]

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[redacted] Shia Amal leader Nabih Barri conceded that he has sanctioned the pressure on Muslim officers because he believes that their presence in the Army provides a "cover" for the Army's Christian leadership. By removing this "cover," Barri reportedly expects to reveal the Army as nothing but a Christian militia.

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-- [redacted] the real loss of soldiers will most likely come after they get paid tomorrow. Most of the soldiers take their pay home, and current speculation is that many of them will not return to the Army. [redacted]

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IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Iran renewed its attack in the marsh east of Al Uzayr and Al Qurnah yesterday and both sides stepped up airstrikes against each others' cities. The Iraqis are finding it difficult to drive the Iranians from the marsh but are confident they have the situation under control. [redacted] Iran has activated two HAWK sites east of Al Basrah, [redacted] [redacted] Baghdad expects a major attack near Mandali by tomorrow. [redacted]

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The Iranian news agency IRNA reported that 10 high-ranking members of the Communist Tudeh Party--including a former Navy commander--were executed on Saturday. Iranian Assembly Speaker Rafsanjani publicly complained yesterday to Moscow over the use of Soviet-origin missiles by Iraq. [redacted]

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A British businessman was assassinated yesterday in Tehran, according to the British Foreign Office. No details of the shooting are available. The BBC speculated that the shooting may have been a case of "mistaken identity" because the victim was walking near the residence of a French diplomat. There were several attacks on French diplomats in Beirut last year after Iran accused France of siding with Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war. [redacted]

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